

An American Sculptor: Augustus Saint- Gaudens, 1848-1907



**Prepared by Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site
Cornish, New Hampshire**

Introduction to the Life and Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 1848-1907

To the Teacher:

The National Park service has developed this curriculum to introduce students to **Augustus Saint-Gaudens**, considered to be one of America's most important sculptors. His life spans a period of history that has been called the **Gilded Age** and therefore reflects cultural themes, aesthetics and historic attitudes of the era.

We will explore the significance of his life and work from immigration at six months of age, to his education as an artist and his remarkable career. Looking at his sculpture brings us face to face with history and with many of the individuals who were participants in the Gilded Age. More than his personal life story, however, we will use his sculptural art as the lens through which we view American history and culture. Visual and language art skills will also be used in student exercises. **The fact that this famous artist chose to live and work in Cornish, NH adds an important local dimension to his life and work that should be meaningful to area students.**

In the following lessons, we will:

- ◆ **Examine the sculptor's life**
- ◆ **See selections of his work**
- ◆ **Learn about the process of making sculpture.**
- ◆ For advanced students and/or those with computer access, we have included an optional, extra-curricular activity entailing computer based research using the National Gallery of Art's website for the *Shaw Memorial* that culminates in writing a brief biography of the sculptor.

In addition, we encourage school groups to visit the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.

When you use any part or the entire curriculum, please help us by completing the evaluation form (please go to www.nps.gov/saga/forteachers/curriculummaterials.htm for this form.). We welcome your comments and suggestion.



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Educational Frameworks and Standards:

- We hope you and your students will enjoy the material presented in this curriculum, which is appropriate for grades 3-6.
- These lessons are aligned with the National Education Standards and States of New Hampshire and Vermont Departments of Education Frameworks and Standards for Social Studies, Language Arts and Art. These will fulfill many goals of your own school's program.

Supports National Standards for Visual Arts K-4

- **4.** Understanding visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- **6.** Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

Supports National Standards for Language Arts K-4

- **4.** Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g. conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
- **5.** Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- **7.** Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g. print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audiences.
- **12.** Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g. the learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Supports National Standards for U.S. History K-4

- **4.1.** Living and working together in families and communities, now and long ago.
- **4.2.** The history of students' own state or region.

Supports NH Curriculum Frameworks for the Arts:

- [Curriculum Standard 4:](#) Analyze the visual arts in relation to history and culture. Especially: describe how history, culture and the visual arts influence each other and identify a variety of art objects, artists and resources specific to New Hampshire.
- [Curriculum Standard 6:](#) Students will make connections among the visual arts, other disciplines and daily life.

Supports NH Curriculum Framework for Language Arts:

- [Curriculum Standard 2:](#) Students will demonstrate the interest and ability to write effectively...
- [Curriculum Standard 3:](#) Students will demonstrate the interest and ability...to listen and view attentively and critically.

- [Curriculum Standard 5](#): Students will demonstrate competence in using the interactive language processes of...listening and viewing to gather and organize information...
- [Curriculum Standard 6](#): Students will demonstrate competence in using the interactive language processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing to communicate effectively.

Supports NH Curriculum Framework for Social Studies:

- [Curriculum Standard 16](#): ...Students will be able to...construct timelines of significant historical events in their community, state and nation.
- [Curriculum Standard 17](#): Students will demonstrate an understanding of the unfolding story of America including the history of their community, New Hampshire and the United States. Especially, explain using examples, how...the arts reflect, maintain and transmit our national and cultural heritage.

Supports VT Curriculum Framework for the Arts

- **Vermont Standards for Visual Arts 3-4**

Critical Response

5.1-Eras and Styles. Students demonstrate understanding of the historical eras, styles and evolving technologies that have helped define forms and structures in the arts, language and literature.

5.2-Times and Cultures. Students demonstrate how literature, philosophy, and works in the arts influence and reflect their time and their local and regional culture.

5.4-Aesthetic Judgment. Students form aesthetic judgments, using appropriate vocabulary and background knowledge to critique their own work and the work of others, and to support their perception of work in the arts, language, and literature.

5.5-Point of View. Students develop a point of view that is their own.

5.7-Audience Response. Students respond constructively as members of an audience.

Artist Process

5.25-Exemplary Works. Students demonstrate knowledge of exemplary works in the arts from a variety of cultures and historical periods.

Supports VT Curriculum Framework for Language Arts

- **Vermont Standards for Language Arts 3-4**

Communication- Writing

1.5- Writing Dimensions- Students draft, revise, edit, and critique written

Supports VT Curriculum Framework for Social Studies

- **Vermont Standards for History/Social Studies Arts 3-4**

3. Students design research by identifying resources for finding answers to their

questions and identifying tasks and how they will be completed, including a plan for citing sources.

8. Students connect the past with the present by describing ways that life in the community and Vermont has both changed and stayed the same over time. Examining how events, people problems and ideas have shaped the community and Vermont.

10. Students show understanding of past, present, and future time by...constructing time lines of significant historical developments in the community and state, identifying the dates at which each occurred.

→ **Vermont Standards for History/Social Studies Arts 3-4**

10. Students show understanding of past, present, and future time by grouping historical events by broadly defined eras in the history of the local community and state.

Measuring calendar time by days, weeks, months, years, decades, and centuries_(e.g., How old is your town?).

Making predictions and/or decisions based on an understanding of the past and the present (e.g., What was farming in Vermont like in the past? What is it like now? What will it be like in the future?)

Identifying an important event in their communities and/or Vermont, and describing a cause and an effect of that event (e.g., Excessive rain caused the flood of 1927, and as a result communication systems have changed to warn people.).

What are the best ways for schools to use and appreciate Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site:

Try one of our three new curriculum packages:

- "Getting to Know Your National Parks" (elementary grades)
- "Augustus Saint-Gaudens" (grades 3-6)
- "Augustus Saint-Gaudens and the Cornish Colony" (grades 7-12)

Plan a visit and share pre-visit information with your students to give them some prior knowledge and help to hold their interest when they visit. We can provide information appropriate to different grade levels: K-12

- Share the site brochure
- Watch the video, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: An American Original*
- Visit our website at www.nps.gov/saga or partner website www.sgnhs.org
- Learn sculpture concepts (relief, sculpture in the round, modeling in clay, making the mold, casting into plaster or bronze)
- Watch the video *Wax Blood/Bronze Skin* to understand how to cast a sculpture

Visit the site! Tell your students that a visit to SGNHS is using a Primary Source. A primary source provides a *window* into past times and experiences. It provides first-hand accounts from people who witnessed an event or lived during a significant time in history. A primary source is always used for research in which you find or see clues and then draw your own conclusions.

- **Take a tour!** Learn about Saint-Gaudens and his most significant works, including portraiture, portrait busts, public monuments to Civil War heroes (including Abraham Lincoln, General Sherman, Admiral Farragut, and the Massachusetts 54th Regiment of African American Volunteers), and other sculptures. Self guided tours are welcome and ranger led tours can be arranged.
- **Visit with the Sculptor in Residence!** This must be coordinated with the Sculptor's schedule and should be arranged when scheduling your school visit.
- **Do on-site activities.** We have developed a number of activities to strengthen information learned during your visit and you are welcome to bring activities relating to your own school curriculum.
 - A map activity (younger grades)
 - "Draw a cameo," and "Draw your own frieze" (younger grades)
 - "Evidence of..." (older grades)

Educational Resources at the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

The following materials are available from the Saint-Gaudens NHS Library to educators for use in their classrooms:

BOOKS:

Augustus Saint-Gaudens: A Master of American Sculpture (1848-1907)

Musée des Augustins, Toulouse, France, 1999.

- The latest scholarship on the sculptor. Heavily illustrated exhibition catalog.

Footprints of the past: Images of Cornish, NH & The Cornish Colony, Virginia Colby and James Atkinson, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, 1996.

- Concise biographies of the entire Cornish Colony.

Footsteps: African American History/54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, Cobblestone Magazine.

- A booklet appropriate for younger grades about Civil War history.

A Circle of Friends: Art Colonies of Cornish and Dublin, University Art Galleries, University of New Hampshire and the Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery, Keene State College, 1985.

- Documents the visual artists of the colonies.

The Shaw Memorial: A Celebration of an American Masterpiece, Eastern National, 2002.

- The history and development of the monument.
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VIDEOS:

Augustus Saint-Gaudens: An American Original (28min.), Our Town Films, 1985.

- The orientation video for the site. Closed caption available.

Masque of the Golden Bowl (60 min.), Spofford Film, 1985.

- The life and work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens.

Glory (152 min.), Columbia Pictures, 1989.

- Academy Award winning film about the 54th Regiment with Matthew Broderick, Denzel Washington and Morgan Freeman.

The 54th Massachusetts: Civil War Journal (50 min.), A&E Television Network, 1993.

- Documentary of the 54th Regiment.

The Medal Maker: Master Sculptor Laura Gardin Fraser (30 min.), Mike Craven Productions, 1997.

- Details the complete process of medallic art.

Public Sculpture: America's Legacy (28:25 min.), Robert Pierce Productions, Inc., 1994.

- Discusses the different purposes of public sculpture.

Wax Blood/ Bronze Skin (26 min.), Spofford Film, 1995.

- Explains the lost wax process of bronze casting using the Farragut monument.